

NEWS ALERT



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Homeland Security Committee

Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, Chairman



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson

Homeland Security Intelligence: Its Relevance and Limitations

March 18, 2009 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Intelligence, Information Sharing & Terrorism Risk Assessment Subcommittee hearing entitled “Homeland Security Intelligence: Its Relevance and Limitations”:

“I am pleased that we are getting “back to basics” by addressing what “homeland security intelligence” is and what DHS’ mission in developing it should be. In many ways, DHS’ Office of Intelligence and Analysis is at a crossroads.

That’s a good thing, because a crossroads is a place where new directions can be taken. And that’s exactly what’s needed for I&A. Secretary Napolitano has promised that DHS going forward will partner better with its State, local, tribal and private sector stakeholders.

For its part, I&A therefore should stop with its typical “top/down” approach to intelligence and start putting State, local, tribal and private sector needs first. Refocusing I&A as a “national fusion center” – with strict privacy and civil liberties protections in place – would be a step in the right direction.

Put simply, I&A must make it a priority to analyze relevant State, local, tribal and private sector information and compare it with national intelligence. In doing so, it will be uniquely able to “connect the dots” and create situational awareness of both near-term and long-term threats to the homeland. Constitutional safeguards, in turn, must be the starting, middle and end points of this effort. Without them, it will be a worrisome and wasted one.”

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